BOOK REVIEW

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Vascular medicine: A companion to Braunwald’s heart disease

Creager MA, Dzau VJ, and Loscalzo J, editors. Philadelphia, PA; 2006; W.B. Saunders, 1056 pages; $149.00.

When I received this book for review, I was excited to read it, and I was not disappointed. This is one of the first fully comprehensive textbooks on vascular medicine as a unique specialty (rather than as just an offshoot of cardiology, interventional radiology, or hematology), and is designed as a companion text to Eugene Braunwald’s “Heart Disease.” The goal of the editors and authors was to present the current state of understanding of vascular biology and to review the entire range of clinical vascular pathophysiology in a manner that is understandable and useful to all physicians caring for these patients, whatever their training background, and in this, they have succeeded.

This is a very comprehensive book, being more than 1000 pages in length, but somehow it seems more manageable than this. The book is well organized, starting out with sections on vascular biology, blood vessel pathobiology, and principles of vascular evaluation, followed by multiple sections covering specific diseases in depth. The individual disease sections are complete but manageable, and cover their respective topics in a logical way. For example, Section 8, “Cerebrovascular Disease,” progresses from epidemiology to clinical presentation and diagnostic methods to therapy, which, in turn, individually covers medical, endovascular, and surgical therapeutic options. Most of the sections follow this general format, which creates a unified pattern that eases the task of reading as well as being a useful reference if a specific piece of information is needed.

The text seems to be quite free of bias and medical-surgical competition, which is much appreciated in today’s climate. Notably, there are almost as many surgical contributors as there are primary medical specialists. What’s more, the surgeons selected are all internationally recognized experts in their field rather than “token” local colleagues. Indeed, almost the only bias I could note was the fact that endovascular treatment of carotid disease comes before the chapter on carotid endarterectomy (which is a pretty minor problem, indeed).

One of the significant strengths of this textbook is the fact that it includes very thorough coverage of relatively uncommon vascular disorders. Notably excellent sections and chapters include those on vasculitis, Raynaud’s phenomenon and related vasospastic disorders, complex regional pain syndrome, erectile dysfunction, and congenital vascular malformations. The color plates at the front of the book include many pictures of patients with less-common vascular problems, which will help the surgeon especially. In addition, the text covers topics such as CT and MR angiography in depth, which are techniques that have arisen after the “learning phase” of many currently practicing physicians. This is the place to learn about the science behind what we are now using every day. The illustrations are excellent and the technical quality of the text is without problems.

This text is going to be useful to a wide range of readers. Vascular surgeons may find it most useful in its coverage of less-common clinical problems as well as its extremely thorough overview of the basic science of the vascular system. Indeed, I believe this book will be indispensable when studying for vascular surgery certification and recertification. The vascular medicine specialist, on the other hand, may well view this as their primary textbook. It offers a good survey of what is done in the operating room for most problems, although at a level that is appropriate for non-surgeons. It is written for a fairly sophisticated audience and while students may not find this easy going, advanced trainees in both medicine and surgery will find this book indispensable.

I think this book belongs on the shelf of every vascular surgeon and physician caring for the patient with peripheral vascular disease. It combines attention to detail and timeliness with a clarity of organization, editing, and readability that makes it unusually useful. It is going to be a “must read” for board certification and recertification, and I commend the editors and contributors for an unusually useful text.

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Tap into the latest knowledge and approaches to vascular medicine with the comprehensive, clinically oriented coverage of this new addition to the Braunwald’s Heart Disease family. You'll find today’s best methods for identifying and treating arterial diseases of the limbs * renal, mesenteric and cerebral circulation problems * aortic aneurysms * vasospastic diseases * vasculitides * venous thromboembolisms * lymphedema * and much more. * Integrates a contemporary understanding of vascular biology with a thorough review of clinical vascular disease. * Covers the fundamental biology of blood ve Preview â€“ Vascular Medicine by Mark Creager. Vascular Medicine: A Companion to Braunwald's Heart Disease. by. Mark CreagerÂ Covers novel antithrombotic therapies for peripheral artery disease and venous thromboemboism, advances in endovascular interventions for aortic aneurysms, and today's best surgical treatments for vascular diseases. Includes seven new chapters: Pathobiology of Aortic Aneurysms; Pathobiology and Assessment of Cardiovascular Fibrosis; Large Vessel Vasculitis; Medium and Small Vessel Vasculitis; Epidemiology and Prognosis of Venous Thromboembolic Disease; Fibromuscular Dysplasia; and Dermatologic Manifestations of Vascular Disease.